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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
U.S. SALT DELEGATION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

SALT TWO
SESSION I
A- 89

DATE: December 14, 1972

TIME: 6:45 - 8:30 p.m.

PLACE: Soviet Mission, Geneva

SUBJECT: Miscellaneous Information on Soviet Military Organization;
Defense Budget; Paris Negotiations; MBFR
PARTICIPANTS: US USSR

Col C.G. FitzGerald

Gen. Lt. K.A. Trusov
Gen. Lt. I.I. Beletsky
Col V.V. Strelbitsky
Col V.V. Budantsev
Mr. Lobachev
Mr. M.P. Shelepin
Mr. A.A. Obukhov

During the reception for the two SALT Delegations hosted by the Soviet Ambassador, the Soviet participants made comments on a variety of subjects as shown below. None of the Soviet participants were present throughout all the conversations.

Soviet Delegation

I asked Gen Trusov whether he was now the Deputy Head of the Soviet Delegation, inasmuch as the Soviet draft communique had changed the usual order of listing Delegates' names and put his name immediately after that of Minister Semenov. He replied in the negative, saying that the USSR Delegation does not have a Deputy Head. He would not, however, elaborate on the reason for the change. He merely said that he did not want to be listed last and that the MFA (Semenov and Grinevsky) always marches as the advance and rear guards for the Delegation's main body.

General Ogarkov

I noted to Gen Trusov that it had been my understanding that Gen Ogarkov had been Deputy Head of Delegation while he was a Delegate. He said Ogarkov is still a member of the USSR Delegation. I asked whether this meant he is still concerned with SALT questions. Both Gen Trusov and Beletsky assured me that he is concerned with SALT. Gen Trusov went on to say that Gen Ogarkov, as First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, is concerned with all questions which are discussed in the General Staff and Ministry of Defense. All papers go across his desk. (Comment: Gen Beletsky commented

State Department review

SECRET/EXDIS

-2-

that he knows Gen Ogarkov well, suggesting the possibility that he is also assigned to the General Staff.)

Defense Ministry Organization

During a long exchange devoted largely to light discussion of non-substantive matters, Col Budantsev said that he has been assigned to the Ministry of Defense long enough to forget that he was ever a pilot or ever assigned to SAF; in response to a question he said this was a result of the influence of the "ground pounders"(Sukhoputchiki) in the Ministry. He then pointed to Captain Mazerkin's short stature and said the latter is even growing shorter because of being "squeezed" by the Soviet Navy on one side and the "ground pounders" on the other. He went on to say that the situation on the Soviet Delegation is the same. Despite the relatively large number of SAF officers who have been advisors on the Delegation, the few "ground pounders" exert all the military influence.

Miscellaneous Information

Gen Beletsky said the Soviet Delegation has both teleprinter and telephone communications with Moscow. He also said the military members of the Delegation receive per diem (Sutochniye). He stated that all military personnel assigned to the Ministry of Defense or General Staff are required to wear uniforms during duty hours. Mr. Obukhov separately suggested the Delegation would be better off without direct communications with Moscow.

Soviet Defense Budget

Gen Trusov observed that the Central Committee and Supreme Soviets of the USSR and RSFSR were to hold a joint session in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the USSR's Formation. I asked whether the session would announce an increase in the Soviet Defense Budget. He said "no". I asked about a decrease, he said "no" once more and then he didn't think there would be any announcement on the budget (presumably, he meant there would be no announcement forthcoming from the 18 December session.)

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-3-

Paris Talks

All Soviet participants individually asked questions about the prospects for a truce in Viet Nam. The general tone of the questions and comments by the MFA participants indicated hope that the talks would end successfully. The tone of the military comments was strongly negative on the prospects for a truce. Col Sherbitsky (Soviet Military Attache) said that the President's latest statement on the Paris talks (I could not clarify which statement he meant) strongly suggested a truce was in the distant future. Gen Trusov confirmed that this was his view also.

MBFR and NATO

Gen Trusov said he understood that some of the Allies had put forward positions at the recent NATO ministerials at variance with U.S. positions. He would not elaborate. I asked whether he knew anything about the Soviet planning for MBFR. He said the Ministry of Defense is doing some work on "reductions" but he isn't too familiar with the current thinking.

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